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AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILOCLEAN AND PEITHESSOPHIAN SOCIETIES

OF

RUTGERS COLLEGE,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE PHILOCLEAN SOCIETY,

July 18th, 1837;

On the day preceding the annual commencement.

BY DANIEL D. BARNARD.



ALBANY:

PRINTED BY HOFFMAN & WHITE.

1837.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW BRUNSWICK, July 19, 1837.

HON. D. D. BARNARD—

SIR: We have the honor to inform you that "the Philoclean Society of Rutgers College," at a meeting held on the 18th inst., passed a resolution by an unanimous vote, "tendering you their thanks for the eloquent Address delivered by you on that day before the Literary Societies of said College, and requesting you to furnish a copy for publication."

Believing that your address is eminently calculated to exert a powerful and salutary influence over young men, and that its publication will be acceptable to the community at large, we respectfully ask permission to present it to the public.

We remain, very respectfully,

Your obd't serv'ts,

ROBT H. PRUYN,

WM. H. STEELE,

ROBERT VAN AMBURGH,

Committee of Philoclean Society.

ALBANY, July 29, 1837.

GENTLEMEN—

Permit me, through you, to return my sincere acknowledgments to my fellow members of the Philoclean Society of Rutgers College, for the kind notice they have been pleased to take of my Address.

If the Address is calculated to exert any good influence, as you seem to hope it may, I have no right to withhold it from publication.

Very respectfully,

Your obd't serv't,

D. D. BARNARD.

MESSRS. ROBT H. PRUYN,

WM. H. STEELE,

R. VAN AMBURGH,

Committee, &c.

ADDRESS.

THE active members of the Literary Societies, before which I am called to appear on this occasion, are young men. Some of these are now about to be dismissed from the protection of the College with which they have here been connected—from the care and nurture of their excellent mother—with her blessing and her honors. Others of their number will follow in succession in due time. Life—that life for which what has here been attempted has been the beginning of preparation—is before them; life in society—active life—manly life—life to prove the value of the instruction they have received, and to try the strength of their principles.

It is to such persons then that I am to address myself at this time. I come to you, my friends, with a message from that stirring world into which you are about to enter; and I shall aim to deliver it with that simplicity and directness which alone become such a ministry. The world is ready and eager to receive you. It has smiles and promises laid up in store for you, and at the moment of your entering it, you will be welcomed with laughter and a shout. But be not deceived. There are those in it who will be forward to offer you their civilities; they will desire to lead you forth into flowery paths, where your feet may tread on roses of perpetual bloom; or they will ask leave to take you to the top of some pinnacle from

which you will survey kingdoms that you may possess on certain conditions. I pray you, be not hasty to follow any such. For there are those also in the world who have better things to offer you. They will make no noisy demonstrations of joy at your approach; they do not dwell in rich men's mansions, nor move in robes of state or office, nor will they come out with pomp and a retinue to meet you. But they will watch your coming with a deep and affecting interest. They will not importune and solicit you, nor tempt you with allurements and promises only to disappoint. But approach them and they will give you a hand, that you may feel the warmth of their hearts in its palm—a welcome that will assure you at once of their sincerity, and of their desire and ability to serve you. It is from these that my message to you comes—from the sober, the thinking, the intelligent, the men of mind and character—and too much honored am I to bear their commission. But so it is; and that message is a warning. They bid me break to you a little the way of the world; open to you some of the difficulties that will lie in your path; let you into some secrets, perhaps, worth knowing; give you some clew to the characters of those you may have to deal with; intimate to you from what quarter you may expect to be assaulted with blandishments, and whereabouts you will need the armour of all your virtue to protect you; give you some account of the present state of society, and what is peculiar about it, and what demands will be made upon you as members of it—on your talents and your efforts, to save yourselves, and save it, and promote at the same time your own

and its advancement, your own prosperity and that of the generation and people amongst whom you dwell.

In executing the responsible office here assigned me, the time will not allow me to indulge in any wide range of observation; but I shall attempt to follow such a course of remark, while calling your attention to one principal topic, as may enable me to impress you, as far as my poor ability will go, with some general principles, and such an order and train of thought and reflection, as may stand you in good stead in hours of casual need, and, in some degree, supply the place and meet the want of more particular and minute directions. Only, I beg of you, do not expect too much from me. An honest effort in your behalf, and which shall at the same time be an honest effort in behalf of society and of our common country, is all that I can promise; for the ability which shall characterize it, I can only furnish it in that humble measure according to which it hath pleased God to endow me with it.

I address you, gentlemen, as scholars; and I shall take care to confine myself, in my remarks, exclusively to topics, the consideration of which belongs to you as scholars. Before I close I shall have occasion to speak of what I suppose to be the true uses of literature, and the true advantages of the literary character, and what particularly is required and demanded of literature and literary men in this country, and at the present day. To do this, in a way to make myself understood, it is necessary for me, in the first place, to advert at some length to the actual condition and tendency of things amongst us. This

I am aware is a task of some delicacy ; but approaching it, as I am sure I do, with singleness of purpose, I shall hope to present my views in a way to avoid the slightest occasion of offence in any quarter. Holding, as I do, that the morals of any country, and especially of a Republic, are inseparably blended with its politics, I shall be led to speak of the politics of this country ; but I shall speak of them in a large sense only, as the politics of the whole country, and of all parties without distinction or discrimination, presenting them moreover in their moral aspects alone, and in no other, and certainly without the slightest regard to any party considerations or interests connected with them.

We live, my friends, in a country, and at a time, marked with some peculiarities. They are, however, only the peculiarities which have resulted from the progress which our race has made in improvement. Man is essentially a progressive being, looking at him in his social state—and we never ought to regard him as possibly belonging to any other than the social state, when we are considering his history, his condition and his prospects on the earth. In this view, it is no matter what individuals may have been in by-gone periods—in classical ages, and in the old time before them. In all ages there have been great men, great for their opportunities and their time ; but their history is important, principally because it is the history of humanity. Their age and country perhaps took their stamp of character from them, in which there was something novel and interesting. This was a stage in man's progress. They wrought out perhaps certain results, and the results may not

have lasted long in the shape in which they were produced, and yet here was another stage in man's progress. Or they made some valuable and lasting discovery, or solved some difficult problem, or established some doubtful theory, or fixed some principle that before was disputed and unsettled—and at every successful exertion of intellect and thought, another and another stage was gained in man's progress. Great events, in the providence of God, brought about through human agency, have marked the more important points in this progress—the resting-places, and the starting-places for a new and more brilliant movement.

The great point to which all things have tended, whether they have been efforts for mankind or against mankind—efforts to enlighten or efforts to brutalize—efforts to serve men or efforts to be served by them—efforts to oppress and enslave, or efforts to emancipate; and so of events and chances, whether they have been immediately auspicious or disastrous—the cause of joy and exultation, or the occasion of mourning and distress—the point to which all has tended has been the developement of the general mind, and the generation of the spirit of freedom. At last the time came, when the social system was set up on a new foundation. This was begun when the Pilgrims touched the Rock at Plymouth; and when all foreign and injurious interference with the free play of the system was forcibly struck off at the Revolution, it was fully established—thenceforward to stand or fall according to its own merits. This is our system, resting on a new basis, and reason enough why the

condition of things amongst us should be marked by some peculiarities.

The only rational theory of civil society with us, is that it is based on human nature—on the discovered, true and essential principles of humanity. In this view, it is sometimes called an experiment, and as such it is a first experiment. It had never been tried before. Neither Athens, nor Sparta, nor Rome, at any period, furnished a precedent for it. All experience in the business of government was rejected, as affording any thing fit to build upon. An entire new foundation was laid. It was found that all men are endowed with certain natural rights; that these rights are indefeasible and inalienable; that in this respect men stand towards each other on a footing of perfect equality, and owe to each other a perfect obligation to be forbearing and just; and hence it followed of necessity, that in arranging the social system with a view to produce the result of government; for the purposes of protection, and control, and mutual benefit—since the invasion of these individual rights is always to be apprehended—the only true method was to let men keep watch and ward over their own rights; holding in their own hands the ultimate and absolute power of protection and defence. And this is democracy in principle, and this is the democracy which was intended to be embodied in our plan of government, and carried out in practice; and it is a very different thing from what some men are pleased to teach, and from what many are made to understand, as being democracy.

That we have found the true theory of government in these United States, I do not entertain a doubt.

And if our attempt is to be regarded as an experiment, and I think it is, it is not because this theory requires to be proved. That is established already, and is properly the result of reasoning from principles which cannot be disputed. Still our attempt is an experiment. It is an experiment to prove—not that our theory of government is the true one—nor yet that God has endowed mankind with faculties which, properly cultivated, render them capable of self-government; for this is now proved, and has passed into a settled truth by what we have already done, if it was never established before—but our experiment is to prove, whether or not, even here, where it is claimed that there is more hope of complete success for the trial than there could be any where else on earth; whether or not, even here, human nature and the general mind have actually yet made such an advance in knowledge, morals, wisdom and true dignity, as amounts to a settled, ascertained and established fitness for the control and direction of the common government, in spite of all the sinister and evil influences to which they are, and are likely to be subjected. This, it seems to me, is the great question to be solved, and it is because of the important part which you, gentlemen, will certainly be called on to take in its solution, that I am thus particular in stating it.

For myself, on all this subject, I am perfectly resolved now, as I think I am at all times, to keep back no opinions of mine, humble and unimportant as they may be, which I can suppose will be of any the least service to others—it being my only anxiety that I violate no just rules of propriety or decorum, by

seizing an unfit occasion to give them expression. I have stated already what I think of our theory of government; that it is the true one, and is founded in the true and well established principles of human nature. I have stated what I think of man as a progressive being considered in the social state, and how all events have worked together for his advancement and his good. How can I doubt this great truth, when I reflect on what he was as a social being—to say nothing of him in the place of his origin, or in the East generally—in Egypt; and then in Greece; and then under the Mistress of the World; and then, after his hibernation and slumber of ages, and his vernal resuscitation at the revival of letters, when I look at what he was in Continental Europe, and what he became in England, and is becoming elsewhere; and compare him in all his previous states, and elsewhere generally in his present state, with himself here and now, in our own time and in our own land—when I think of all this, how can I doubt that man in his earthly and social condition is a progressive being, with capacities for improvement, and gradually, though slowly, rising above himself, throwing off his manifold burthens, with less and less of the animal about him, and more and more of the man, and preparing to take a high and noble stand as an intelligent, reasoning and reasonable being, enjoying liberty and happiness because fit to be free and happy, and shewing that excellent dignity of his nature of which he sometimes boasts.

But then the question returns—not whether he has yet made the highest advance of which he is capable—certainly, I do not think he has—but whether at

the best, which I assume to be his condition here, he has yet reached that point of excellence that, having his right hand already on the helm, he will be able to hold it firmly, against all seductions and all assaults; and if not against uncommon and unlooked for chances, yet at least on through the ordinary perils of the long, untried and difficult passage and way that lie before him. It is not a question concerning his capabilities—in these I have a steady faith, a confidence which I think no event or circumstance can shake—but it is a question concerning his attainments; not a question how far he is able to go, but how far he has actually gone, and therefore a matter of fact to be ascertained, rather than a principle to be settled. And here is the point about which honest minds may, and do, doubt and differ. This is the point of our great experiment in politics; this is just what remains to be settled by that experiment, and about which nothing certain can be known till the process shall be thoroughly wrought out.

I know very well, gentlemen, and you will know more of it probably than you now do, how odious a thing it is when a Republican doubts, and what a grateful service is rendered to the people when the song of security and peace is sung to them. Time out of mind, it has been common to soothe children with a lullaby; and this is the sum of their compliment, when persons are found busying themselves with persuading the people how safe they are. These persons are our Sicilian women who would charm us with their melodious voices, to forget our employments and our duties, until at last we die of inanition. But I have a hope left, that a resolution, less deter-

mined than that of Ulysses and his companions, will serve us to pass them by, unheeding and unharmed; that we shall not need to stop our ears, or lash ourselves to our ship's mast, as they did, but only to hold fast to our integrity, and conquer by the strength of our principles. If the question concerning the success and permanency of our political forms be such as I have stated—a mere fact to be ascertained only on trial, just as we would find the strength of materials to be used in the arts, after they had been subjected to some chemical or other process designed to impart firmness and durability, but the whole effect of which had never yet been tested and was unknown—a question of acquisition and attainment, the sum of which can only be found on a searching examination—a question whether the people, computed by numbers, have yet made the requisite advance in knowledge and morals to make them equal to the burthen of civil government, notwithstanding the deteriorations to which they are certainly liable—whether there is leaven enough to leaven the whole lump—whether the precious ores are sufficient to constitute a coin which can take stamp as of standard value, after the full infusion of worthless and baser metal, which is ready and preparing to be poured in, no man as yet being able to say to what probable amount the alloy may reach—if such be the true question, then it seems to me that our prophets of smooth things should shew us under what commission it is that they are able to look into the night and darkness of the future with so clear a vision, and make us see and comprehend objects and conclusions which the natural eye cannot discern, that at least we may be certi-

fied from which of the two great sources of invisible power it is that they derive authority to do these things. For myself, I would not have a feebler faith than becomes a christian man, but I am not willing to be left without a reason to give for such as I have. The logic too of these persons, it seems to me, is not more satisfactory than their prophetic teaching, though they are used to give us their conclusions with the same countenance of gravity and seeming confidence with which they utter their predictions. It is short and comprehensive reasoning certainly, and a pity that it is not conclusive, that because we have endured for forty-five years, we shall therefore last forever. The misfortune is that men have died much past that age, and worms have eaten them; and nations have perished at a much more advanced date of existence, and that from diseases generated in the greenest youth, or even born with them. What a considerate and wise man wishes to know at this day is—and it is a curiosity prompted by reasonable hopes and by a generous and large benevolence—it is, whether this new and happier form of civil society which we have found is likely to be enduring, outlasting convulsions and revolutions if they shall come—not merely whether the American people shall form one nation or be broken into a hundred, which is itself a question of no mean interest; but whether, come what may, the substance of our new and admirable methods in civil government shall be preserved—whether the green spot we have reached is an oasis in the desert or a fertile country beyond it—whether the shore we have touched, we who are the true discoverers of a new world, and entitled, at least, to that honor, let

events turn out as they will, whether this strand be really that of the great main, of a vast and habitable Continent, or only that of a respectable Island in its neighborhood, which, however, all political geography will forever set down as properly belonging to it, though it cannot be called a part of it—this is the sort of enquiry to which the philosophic and benevolent mind turns and bends; and since there are things about it which cannot now be known beyond vague conjecture, and which time, and trial, and examination can alone reveal, I hold such a mind to be quite as wise in its doubts and apprehensions, as that of an other man in his boast of an unreasoned and unreasonable confidence which he must be a happy man, if he feel, and a weak one or worse, to say so, if he do not.

The truth is, it is this eternal public boasting of ourselves, of what we are, and what we are sure we shall be, which makes us distrusted and too often despised by the world. But this is not its worst effect, nor by any means the reason for the consideration which I bestow upon it. It is its direct and immediate influence on ourselves that I chiefly deprecate. Here is a systematic self-adulation, which causes us to swell with pride, while there is little to be proud of, makes us confident just when we ought to be cautious, and reckless when we should be watchful—which blinds us to every real danger, vitiates the mind in its purest principles, prepares us to credit our own lie, and fall as the victims of a delusion invented by ourselves. By all means, gentlemen, I would teach you to beware of it, and avoid it.

But while I would warn you against an over-

weening confidence in the success and permanence of our plan of civil polity, I am not less anxious that you should guard yourselves against all unreasonable and unmanly fear, and above all against the approach of any feeling of despondency. You must not unnerve and unfit yourselves for action—for, depend upon it, yours will be a life of action, demanding nothing less than the stretch of all your energies, if you mean to be found at all at the posts to which the time assigns you. My own belief is that we may be carried safely through. That there is yet virtue enough amongst the people to hold us together seems certain, because we are still held together ; and I believe—though of this I insist that no man can be certain—that having a clear capital of intelligence and virtue that will yet bear considerable drains upon it, we may save ourselves from total bankruptcy, notwithstanding the pressure, if we will bestir ourselves in time, and act with that promptness, energy and skill which become men who find themselves in circumstances of peril. I think our fate rests with ourselves ; at least I think that nothing can save us without an effort on our part. We must take measures to increase our solid capital ; and, as we cannot borrow, we must create. Demands will certainly be made upon us that cannot be met without considerable accumulation. We cannot trade always on credit, and keep off the day of reckoning and account forever, by boasting of our resources. We must make some sacrifices to put ourselves in funds. We must make exchanges of whatever we have about us, that is worthless to us or worse, and of all our negative properties, for active, substantial and available values. And above all we must sow and

plant, and labor with our own hands, to make that rich virgin soil, with which it has pleased God to bless the mind and heart of this people, give us large and willing returns, in harvests of smiling and cheering plenty. Add to this that we must observe a rigid and virtuous economy in all our habits, and take care that our mental and moral gains be not dissipated in wild and visionary speculations—Thus doing and acting, I feel the strongest conviction that we may save all; and if it be otherwise, if we are destined to lose all else, at least we shall preserve our honor, so far as that is ever preserved in the failure and wreck of fortune.

But it is necessary, if we would conduct ourselves with any degree of wisdom, that we should have some adequate notion of the difficulties that surround us, and some just idea of the best mode of proceeding to rectify mistakes, and bring our affairs into an amendatory and prosperous train. And I take leave now to proceed to some considerations connected with so important a subject.

The point, gentlemen, to which I wish chiefly to direct your attention at present concerns the manner—so grovelling and so debasing on all sides—in which the intercourse and correspondence with the people in this country is mainly conducted. And on this topic, I shall think myself at liberty, as I certainly feel called on, to indulge in some freedom of remark—the more so as the offence I complain of is one of common, I had almost said, of universal commission—so common certainly that I am sure I shall not run the least hazard, when speaking of the conduct of politicians before the people, of having it supposed by any one, that I can intend to make the slightest reference either to

particular individuals, or to persons of any one party or school of politics rather than another. When I speak of politicians moreover, I desire to be understood as making a broad distinction between those who take office, or enter into political life or political contests, with an honest and hearty desire to sustain what they regard as valuable principles, and promote what they regard as the highest good of the community—whether agreeing or disagreeing myself with their views—and those who trade and traffic in politics, who fetch and carry, and plot and pander for party or for men, and who, while they seem to serve others or the public, have yet a shrewd eye on the main chance, and mean in the end only to serve themselves. It is of this latter class of politicians infesting all parties alike—politicians by profession, trading politicians—of whom I am to be understood as speaking in this connection. And I remark of them in the first place, that it would seem, from their demeanor in public, as if they had really little else to do in life but practice the conned and labored arts of seduction, debauchery and ruin on all around them. The hope that is left of them is, that there are some symptoms of shame and modesty remaining, after all their prostitutions; because as yet, except in some notorious and abandoned cases, which however are fearfully on the increase—they have the grace to condemn their own immorality in their own private judgments, and in their familiar and confidential communications. It is certainly a strange if not anomalous condition of things, however, that they should be willing to display their irregularities and crimes unblushingly before the world, and never think of concealments or excu-

ses till they have escaped from public observation—that they should practice their naked exhibitions of disease and deformity in the eye of the noon-day sun, and in the face of a cloud of witnesses, and reserve their disguises to be put on, if at all, only in the closest retirement. This is indeed reversing the common modes of human conduct, and shews that there must be something wrong in the stamina of the constitution.

Men who come thus before the public, who thus converse openly with the people, the exhibitors of a kind of political legerdemain, cannot suppose that all observers are fools. However little credit they may be disposed to give the majority for discernment, they cannot help knowing that they stand before many in an attitude of ample and complete exposure. There are those among their spectators who are never deceived; who not only know in general terms that a delusion is practised, that the appearances presented are the result of art and trick, produced by manual dexterity and some intimate acquaintance with the powers and influences of nature, but who also know the very secrets of the pretended magic, how every manifestation is effected, and could employ the same arts to produce the same results, if they were so disposed, and other arts perhaps of the same sort but of still more astonishing potency, to the confounding even of the Magians themselves. And yet, though all this is well known to the exhibitors, they never falter in their course, but conduct their experiments and employ their enchantments with as much gravity and composure as if there was nobody present to despise them.

It is not difficult to account for this. In the first

place, like other professors in occult science, their faith in popular credulity is perfect. They make no more question of that, than they do of their own skill and power in the arts of delusion which they practice. And then they have an abiding confidence also in the forbearance and criminal silence of those who understand them. This is the worst feature in the whole case, and I shall not fail to recur to it before I close. These worse than Egyptian sorcerors will never cease to be called for, and never cease to use their enchantments, until they suffer an open and manifest exposure before the people; until the means and instruments by which they operate are shewn to be powerless or are made so; until their serpent wands shall be plainly swallowed up by other instruments of impression and power, which, if not unlike them in outward form, shall be armed with an influence and an authority which God and the truth only can bestow.

It is partly the design of our social and civil forms, while they secure a strict equality of rights, to produce an approximate equality of conditions also—saving and preserving however those distinctions and differences which will always prevail, wherever men are content to think that mind is worth more than muscle, and knowledge preferable to blank ignorance, and virtue better than vice. But there is here a theoretic perfection, which it must be confessed it is difficult to attain in practice; and the more so, because while a few there may be who will strive to make it a reality, others there are, and probably the greater number, who will be found at war with it. Not being themselves exactly of the order of those who are fitted to lead in a society where wisdom, morality and man-

ners are counted at what they are justly worth, and having at the same time a restless though a low ambition, they go to work to employ other and more facile modes of personal distinction and eminence. They contrive to overcome the natural gravity which by a universal law, would keep them forever weighed down to a sphere of comparative humility, by artificial expedients. They resort to various methods, according to the bent of their particular genius or the means that are thrown in their way, to attract attention, gain influence, or win applause. They enshrine themselves in golden temples and set up altars of state and magnificence, for worship and sacrifice. Or they become oracular, and utter mysterious responses, or answer only perhaps, like the statues at Antium, with a nod. Or, having a mind for a high flight, at whatever hazard, and however brief the time of their elevation, somewhat after the example of the modern aeronaut, they manage to gain and bag for their use so much of the light and volatile breath of popular favor as may serve to lift them for a while above the level earth, and quite out of the reach of all competition by any of the ordinary, safe and useful means of rising in the world.

It is melancholy to say or think so, and yet we ought not to disguise from ourselves the too obvious fact, that society with us is habitually in a state of unrest and disturbance. The ocean is scarcely more so just after a storm. If there was nothing in our condition with which we ought to be satisfied, or if all this agitation in society was produced, as the atmosphere is shaken by tempests, only to purify it, we should not condemn, but rejoice in it. As it is, we may flatter

ourselves that some small part of it may be referred to such an origin ; but unhappily we are compelled to account for much, if not the most of it, by reference to other and less creditable causes. We cannot avoid noticing, whatever disguises the matter is made to wear, that there is an antagonist and desperate struggle perpetually going on between man and man, and between party and party, which has something for its object verry different from principle or reform. Something is evidently in view all the while besides the correction of abuses, the purification of manners, or the advancement of the public weal. We see evidently that it is not a struggle between the principle of good and the principle of evil, between the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness, between Ormuzd and Ahriman as they have it in the Mythology of the East. Men contend for mastery, but there is little of the grace and noble bearing of chivalry about the encounter. They contend for precedence, and they would win by jostling each other from the course. They contend for the prizes that capricious fortune throws out in the turn of her magic wheel, and he is the best man who can empty a thousand pockets into his own without a consideration, in the briefest time and with the happiest address. They contend for place and stations of honor in their country's service, and they wear out their strength in worrying each other, while, on both sides, they scarcely conceal the grossness of their sentiments towards the proud and high-born mistress whose favor they solicit, and whose cause they would so gallantly espouse. In a degree, it is true, these things happen every where ; but, if not worse, they are at least more noticeable here than

any where else, since they are in such shameful disagreement with the professions we make, and war so foully with the principles on which we claim to stand. And there is a sadder view of the matter still, and that is, that such a condition of things consists as little with our safety as it does with our honor.

There are two principal modes by which individuals attempt to escape from that general equality of conditions which is the law of society with us. Wealth is one, and the other is politics; and together they form the main object and cause of those strifes and contentions with which the bosom of society is continually rent. Of course, I shall not be understood to speak of the pursuit of wealth or politics, as a thing in itself to be condemned. Much less I hope shall I be suspected of that sort of radicalism, which would refuse to accord to the possession of property, and to high public station, the considerations of respect and dignity which ought always belong to them. In the pursuit of wealth, it is the means that are too commonly resorted to to acquire it, and the wretched notions which are entertained of its value and uses, that are the objects of my abhorrence and contempt. And in the fevered and exhausting race for office and power, it is the free, voluntary and almost universal sacrifice of independence, honesty, honor and principle which is made to gain the advantage and to keep it, that is the occasion at once of the disgust and the alarm which I profess to feel. It is this latter evil, so monstrous and so full of peril, that I am chiefly concerned to exhibit and expose at the present time.

Since the people are the source of political power, since it is to be received at their hands, and only re-

tained at their pleasure, the question instantly springs up in the mind of the dullest aspirant, how, and by what means, can this many-headed but generally singlehearted being be best propitiated. It needs no precept from classic Greece, and her "Old Man eloquent," to make a politician see how useful and important it is to understand the people; and a little consideration shews him that, for the mere purpose of success, there is no intrinsic difficulty in the subject which need deter the weakest from the attempt. The people are men, with the dispositions, passions and habits of men. Every individual brings in his contribution of humanities to the common stock; and they are always the same in kind, though they may differ greatly in proportions and degrees. In working up the materials thus furnished, into that sort of composition which constitutes the body politic, the original elements undergo little if any change. They may easily be traced in their new combinations, and detected in their new manifestations. Indeed it is, after all, only associated mind, temper and habit, which the politician has to deal with, instead of the same qualities in a single individual; and the effect of association and sympathy is, to clothe these qualities with strength and intensity, and sometimes with terrible energy, but not to change either their nature or their general direction. These remain the same. And though human nature in the mass may seem at first a difficult instrument to play upon, yet in very truth it is as easy as the same instrument in the most simple and unassociated form. It has no new stops, and it requires only common skill to command them to an "utterance of harmony." As Hamlet says of the recorder: "'Tis

as easy as lying ; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops." The truth is, the character of an individual may be, and often is, a difficult study, while that of the multitude may be quite simple—at least if the object in the latter case be only to know enough to be able to move and to seduce. To know that, naturally, men are jealous of superiors ; that they envy the fortunate ; that they hate distinctions, however essential or deserved, unless shared or created by themselves ; and that in their plan of levelling, which they call equality, it is almost wholly a process of depression with scarcely an attempt at elevation ; and to know that, in general, they are at the same time credulous ; easily imposed on ; apt to be deceived ; susceptible of flattery ; vain ; trusting to appearances where there is no reality ; and dazzled and captivated with any shows got up to astonish or amuse—here is a brief and imperfect summary, yet containing enough for the manual of any shrewd politician who might choose to take the field with a *vade mecum* of such comprehensive and excellent morality.

We see at least that the temptation to push forward to the experiment, when no other guide or authority than this, and only a moderate share of prudence and sagacity are demanded, must be nearly if not quite irresistible—too much so to make it at all wonderful that we find it in fact often unresisted. This political being who is so coveted and caressed by public men and by parties, is no better or wiser than themselves, whatever solemn asseverations they may make to the contrary ; and that they know too as well as

we can tell them. This being may be fairly represented by any average individual among themselves—any one whose knowledge and acquaintance with principles, with public affairs and the world, whose judgment and opinions, prejudices and passions, temper and manners, sense, sentiments and feelings, do not rise above, or fall below, the humble measure and standard to which the majority attain—only to make such an one a just and worthy representative of what the people are, we must give him, in our conceptions and estimate, a strength, a power, a torrent and tempest of energy both in his opinions and passions, and a physical potency also, such as never belong to persons, and can only be exhibited by numbers. We the people are such, let politicians tell us what they will; and as for our wisdom and our morals, why the best that can be said with truth is, that we are wise when we are wise, and moral when we are good; and it is as easy to judge both of our wisdom and our goodness, as it is to judge of the wisdom and goodness of any individual whose acts and principles are known and understood. And we are insulted therefore with a gross attempt at base and degrading adulation, if we had sense enough to see it, when we are told that we are always wise and good; always right and correct in our principles, our opinions and our measures; right in the objects we have in view, in the means we use, and in the sentiments we entertain; right in our views of public policy, and the common good; right in our estimate of men as well as of things; right when we condemn and denounce, and when we acquit and applaud; right in theory and right in practice; right in our philosophy, and right in our moral-

ity ; right always and right in all things, and so right in every thing, that we cannot be wrong in any thing. Oh if this be so, what a convenient and admirable standard of right and wrong, and of wisdom and folly, the world has at last in us the people !

That this solemn foolery is established in common practice in this country, and, what is worse, is sanctioned, if not by open approval, yet by general silence and a smile, will be denied by no one who knows the truth, and regards it. Of course this is now a part of our public morals, and it becomes all men to consider how such a state of things consists with prosperity, with security—with whatever we ought to expect or hope for our country or our race. And it is in this point of view, that I desire to press the subject on your attention. My fear is, and I not only confess it, but with this and every fitting opportunity I would proclaim it, if possible to infect others with it as deeply as it is felt by myself, that, through the prevailing influence of politics, we are as a people undergoing a complete and disastrous revolution in morals. I am afraid we are fast losing, if we have not already lost, the original purity and brightness with which we set out ; that our manners, our sentiments and our virtue are falling into easy, consenting and accommodating habits ; that our patriotism is becoming narrow and selfish, degenerating into blind, vulgar and corrupt attachments ; that vicious and degrading sentiments do not shock us as they once did ; that we are getting familiar with the taint that is in the air, which therefore no longer offends the sense, and now gives us no warning of the pollution in the midst of which we dwell, and the poison we inhale. It is natural cer-

tainly, that as youth ripens into manly years, something of that innocence which thinks no evil because it knows none, should be dimmed a little of its whiteness and its lustre. We do not expect to find in manhood the virtues merely of simplicity and uncorrupted ignorance; and we care not how full and perfect knowledge may be, if there be sound and settled principle to regulate thought, and direct and control conduct. But it is to be feared that we have not attained our majority, without having essentially soiled the purity of the general mind, and contracted a positive grossness of thought and feeling, while we have been gaining knowledge and experience. Indeed, it is impossible it should be otherwise, as we must be satisfied if we consider the manner in which the business of our politics is too often conducted.

In the first place, public men, and those who are seeking preferment by popular favor, seem, on all hands, to have come to the fixed conclusion, that there is one only mode of certain or probable success, and that they adopt without scruple and without disguise. They pretend to believe in the perfection of man in the concrete; however orthodox their faith may be in the doctrine of personal depravity. They do not undertake to explain so great a mystery, or ever to render a reason for their confidence; and though it has never been revealed to the spirit, or manifested to the sense, yet they believe—at least, so they take the most untiring pains to assure us. But in all this, they act on the avowed principle that the people are weak, if they are not wicked; and that it is an easy matter to deceive, and keep them in a state of thorough delusion, simply by a course of skillful and unscrupulous

flattery and falsehood. Besides this, their conduct clearly implies, whatever they may think of the present purity of the people, that they have no very exalted notion of their capabilities in resisting the contamination of bad examples and vicious sentiments. They fear nothing from the rebukes of offended virtue; they hope every thing from the plastic nature of the materials which they intend to mould to their purposes. It is necessary, however, that they should begin, not with protestations only, but with prostrations also; and it is with no christian temper, that they humble themselves, in order to be exalted. Body and spirit, they bow down before the multitude, falling low at the foot of their great idol, and offering themselves and all that they possess, intelligence, independence, virtue, manners, manhood, all, as a just and reasonable sacrifice. They come to hold truth in utter contempt, and practice falsehood almost without an effort at concealment, and wholly without shame. Indeed it is not uncommon to see cases, where it is too plain, that it is deliberately intended to challenge admiration for the adroitness and skill with which the means and instruments of corruption are employed and used. Ambition itself, if it were not shameful to call it so, sometimes glories in taking so oblique and tortuous a direction. It affects the movement of the serpent, more than that of the eagle; but at the same time courts observation and the notice of the public eye, with as covetous and eager a spirit, as if it were used to mount instead of creep or crawl; and it would suffer a deeper disappointment even than want of success could inflict, if being successful, it failed to attract universal attention, and gain universal credit

for the manner in which its end and object were effected—for the brilliant and resistless power it had displayed to charm, to lure, and to destroy.

I do not like quoting the authority of foreigners against ourselves—and especially I hate appealing to a book in which I find much to condemn. And yet on this subject I think we are too fastidious, and that we owe it to our vitious habit of bestowing everlasting praises on our own social and political condition, that we are so averse to hear what intelligent and philosophic observers from other countries may happen to think of us. When travellers, returning home, vent their spleen upon us, let us despise them; when they mistake us, let us pity them; but when they would reveal us truly to ourselves, let us have the courage to face the mirror they present to us, and, correcting if need be, by our own candid reflections, any casual distortions we may discover, contemplate ourselves calmly in the image so far as it may chance to be faithful. A very recent writer on this country, one who is understood to stand in intimate relations with the struggling democracy of her own country, who came therefore to observe for them and returned to bear testimony to them, says of us: “Scarcely any thing that I observed in the United States caused me so much sorrow as the contemptuous estimate of the people entertained by those who were bowing the knee to be permitted to serve them.” If there be much truth in such a remark as this, it may seem a small matter to some, but in my way of thinking, it savours of a coming doom, nearer at hand than we may be willing to believe, unless averted by some decisive effort. And, for my own part, I recognize

lineaments here which I think can no more be denied, than a man could safely deny his identity in the presence of those who have known him in daily, familiar intercourse from his cradle.

I confess, after all, my opinion is, that the people are not generally so thoroughly deceived and deluded, by certain professions which are made to them, as some politicians undoubtedly suppose. I should have better hopes of them if I thought they were, for in that case I should think the evil were easily corrected. In regard to persons, and in regard to particular measures, there is no doubt the people are liable to the grossest impositions ; and this is certainly a thing of no trifling importance in the consideration of our general prosperity ; and yet I cannot help placing its consequence far below that which belongs to the question, whether the people as a body have so far profited by the teachings of five-and-thirty or forty years that they may now be understood as prepared to yield, and actually yielding, a willing assent and sanction to that system of philosophy in politics, which assumes it to be a first principle that public affairs can never be effectually served with simple honesty, nor without the practice of a certain amount of corruption. This I do not quite suppose ; I do not suppose that there is any settled philosophy in the public mind on the subject ; but I do think that public credulity is not quite so blind and unwitting as some simple politicians, who profess a great deal of honesty and practice very little, are apt to imagine. I think there are impressions on the public mind, falling little short of convictions, picked up from long observation, and adopted after some, but no very profound reflec-

tion, which are exceedingly unfavorable to the reception and nurture of good principles. The people are beginning to think it is really so, that politics is a business of human concern which is wholly excepted out of the common law of morals; and perhaps the more so here, where it is a chief business of life, and where the entire body of the people share the responsibility if there be any. At the worst, it is a case of *communis error*; and that men are apt to think as good to justify a positive wrong, as it is to excuse the neglect of some inconvenient or absurd regulation of the municipal power. They may never have heard of Nicolas Machiavel and his policy; or of Robert Walpole and his principles; and yet if the thoughts which float in their minds could be arrested and presented in any palpable form, we should discover, I am afraid, that their sentiments are not widely different from those on which the latter person acted, and which the former taught in his doctrines of *The Prince*. "Good faith, justice, clemency, religion," said Machiavel, "should be ever in the mouth of the ruler; but he must learn not to fear the discredit of any actions which he finds necessary to preserve his power." It is a favorable and hopeful consideration certainly that such sentiments are not yet openly avowed by them; but I must be permitted to doubt whether the feeling be not extensively indulged. To this extent I am sure it is; that large numbers of them deem it simply absurd to look any longer for honesty in politics, or in political men; they feel satisfied that it is not to be expected, and deem it, therefore, idle to dwell upon it as if desirable. On this point of honesty, however credulous in every thing else, they are

strongly skeptical. They confide very little in all the pretensions that are made of being governed by such a principle. They expect the statesman to be corrupt; they expect the politician to be crafty, and subtile, and insincere; and if he be the man of their choice, or of their party, they will support him, as if they believed him to be fair and true as he may pretend to be—leaving him to please himself with the notion that his success in playing off a false character on them has been complete, while in truth he is much more deceived than they are. Indeed, I am by no means certain, since they naturally love a frank and bold man, and hate a coward, that a certain degree of ingenuous confession on the part of a politician would not commend him to temporary favor much more effectually, than if he were to continue to cover himself with all manner of thin and penetrable disguises.

I know very well that this must sound like ungracious language. But when I am about to recommend courage to others, and that in a case where nothing short of the most dauntless bearing can answer any good purpose, I shall take care that I do not spoil all by myself setting an example of cowardice. I am not much concerned to know what may be the reflex action of my opinions on myself. But I may claim at least, by way of anticipation, that I hold the people in no lower estimate than those do, who practice all their lives long on sentiments and opinions, if they would confess them, which cast on the people infinitely more discredit, than any which I entertain. And in truth I think it will be found in the end that I differ from such persons principally in indulging

an unaffected though considerate trust, and a confident though trembling hope, in human nature, which they never feel; or if they ever do, which nevertheless they take the most effectual means to quench both in themselves and in all others. Certainly, I do think the people chargeable with the offence of favoring a degree of corrupt action in politics; but I think this is a lesson they have been slow to learn, even under the instructions of very competent and zealous masters; that it is partly through want of correct knowledge, and partly through want of reflection, they have done it; that they rather submit to it, under the notion that they are bowing to some stern decree of inexorable destiny, than take to it kindly, with an appetite and a relish for it; that there is better stuff in them than that which has been so successfully developed in the schools where their ideas have learned to shoot; and that juster methods of teaching and better examples will bring out sound, generous, noble, just, saving qualities—such as I know to be in them.

And this, gentlemen, is the issue to which I have desired to bring your minds at last. I would inspire you with a noble, but enlightened zeal in behalf of your fellow men; and I would do this, by such full and free disclosures of the case you have to deal with, as my limited acquaintance with the subject will enable me to make,—nothing extenuating, and setting down nothing in malice—shewing you at once the discouraging difficulties which you must encounter, and what the ground is on which alone you can build any confidence of success—bringing the case of your patient before you, as I would present

that of a beloved child to a favorite and skillful physician, and, while I tell you plainly that I think him very sick, and while I give you the history of his malady with some account of its causes and its progress, and am faithful to omit no symptom which I deem unfavorable, pointing you, at the same time, to his excellent constitution, to his strength to endure disease, to his natural tenacity of life, and in every way endeavoring to inspire you with that strong hope of recovery which I myself feel, and without which your efforts would be likely to be feeble and altogether unavailing.

I look to the educated and literary class in the country, to save it. No matter who commands for the voyage, if we cannot find pilots who understand the channels we must pass, with their windings and their soundings, who know where hidden dangers lurk and how only we may avoid them, and who will aid us with their skill and their counsel to bring us into port, still I would hope on, but I should think the odds most fearfully against us, and not much to choose between going down in the deep sea, and waiting a little to be stranded in shoal water where we may perish no less miserably and certainly, though close upon the land. But there is more to be done than merely to conduct the business of navigation—to set the canvass, and hold the helm, and study the chart. We must take care that the ship be well found and well provided for the adventure, and especially that we be not caught in the mid ocean with unsound timbers in her. In ordinary times, there can never be any great difficulty in carrying on the legitimate and proper business of government. Not

that this business can, at any time, when our affairs are in the best train, and the weather is the calmest, be cheapened down to the value of low and uninformed capacities, as some seem to suppose; but what I mean is, that we have much less occasion to trouble ourselves about the manner in which the actual administration is carried on, whether it be in the hands of one party or of another party, of one set of men or of another set of men, or whether one or another system of economical measures be pursued, than we have to take care of our principles and our morals. Depend upon it, administration will never be much or long at war with these. It will take care of itself, or will be easily taken care of, when these are right; and if these are wrong, men of administration and measures of administration, however excellent, will not avail us much.

Now it is here, in the matter of principles and morals, and chiefly in what may well enough be called the morals of politics, that the services of the educated and literary class in the country are demanded. Gentlemen, I would not have you politicians; that is, I would not have you make a trade of politics, or look solicitously for political elevation. You can serve your country better, with surer success, and with vastly more honor. And there is no profession or occupation, to which your tastes and inclinations may assign you, which would not consist perfectly with such a duty, or which would be materially interrupted by it. Give your hearts, warm and honest, to your country and your fellow-men. Cast about you, each for himself, for the best mode of serving them. You have treasures of learning, and if you are wise you will

have greater—offer these. You have been trained to public speaking, and to the use of that mighty instrument, the pen, and practice will give energy, and strength, and polish. Here is the possession of tremendous power over human thought and action—offer this. Cultivate habits of association and union among yourselves, and with all who follow similar pursuits, and whose learning, tastes, temper, and elevation of character make them congenial spirits. There is strength and encouragement in association. There is power in combination and union. Let educated and literary men every where band themselves together, and together labor for the public welfare. There is no danger from this sort of class spirit, and this kind of aristocracy. The more we can have of it the better. When mind leads in a community—mind trained in the ways of virtue, and devoted to the cause of virtue—liberty is safe, and human happiness is secured as far as it is attainable on earth. God has bestowed intellect on man for this very purpose; and in its employment he rises into some faint likeness to the Deity himself. Cultivate mind then, and cultivate morals, and cultivate letters, and cultivate a community of feeling and interest amongst yourselves with all the rest. Propose to yourselves noble objects, and that will give a noble character to all your thoughts and all your efforts. No man can be self-seeking and mean spirited, no man can be sordid and grovelling who labors for his country and his kind. It belongs to learned and literary men to form and stamp the character of the age. On this point, the examples of classic periods must never cease to be quoted and insisted on. In many things we are bet-

ter than the best of Greeks and Romans ever were—Heaven has forsaken us if we are not. We do not ask them for their religion, nor their pastimes, nor their systems of ethical philosophy; but still we may learn from them much that is indispensable to know. We may learn from them why letters and the arts ought to be cultivated, in what manner, for what principal ends and objects, and what controlling and tremendous influence they may be made to exercise. There was with them a broad-cast purpose, which we might do well to imitate. There was a scope and compass in their views comprizing all the present, and as much of the future as could be grasped, with at the same time a distinctness and directness of object, which, without at all weakening, gave their works a diffusive character, and prepared them to be as permanent as they were liberal. We are apt to think of Lycurgus and Solon as statesmen and rulers only; they were authors, and impressed and led the age by their writings. Solon particularly devoted his life to literature. He owed his success as a general, in a memorable war, to his more splendid success as a poet, for it was a single poem of his own that infused that spirit into the Athenians before which Salamis fell. It was his power to wield language and letters, joined to a shrewd acquaintance with affairs, which gave his legislation such eminent success, and so much celebrity. The Bards of the Heroic ages with their hymns and invocations, and Hesiod with his Theogony, and Homer with his immortal poems, created and systematized a popular religious creed for a great, long-enduring, and wonderful people, giving animation to what were before only symbols, and souls to

sensible things, and personality and consciousness to the invisible powers of nature. The power of literature, in what we are apt to think its lightest form, is strongly illustrated in that beautiful and familiar allegory, which represents the moral efficacy of the lyrics of Orpheus. What, indeed, was Greece in her best days, but what her men of letters and her artists made her ; and what else is it in modern days, and what else will it be in all coming time, but an acquaintance with her works of taste and genius, which gives, and will give her so conspicuous a place on the map of the earth, and so large and distinguished a share in the consideration and admiration of the world ?

But it is the direct and home effect of Literature which I am most concerned at present to consider ; and this in the country referred to was complete. Literature was prepared for universal influence, and, in the want of the easy means of communicating with the public at large which we possess, they contrived other, and very effective ways of reaching the ear and the heart of the community. They resorted to Rehearsals ; to Literary contests in public ; to free Dramatic representations ; and to their Symposia. And they took care, let it be well remarked in passing, while composing expressly with a view to arrest and impress the entire public mind—the people as a body and in numbers—not to lose the evident advantage which high and noble thoughts, exquisitely polished in the terms employed to convey them, must always give. The great nations of antiquity moreover, let me say, afford another sort of testimony, more melancholy but not less convincing than that

which the period of their prosperity and glory presents, to the excellence and the power of letters. It is the voice they utter at the season of their decline and fall. It is common to speak of the decline of classic literature, as having been caused by the prevalence of luxury, the corruption of taste and morals, the recurrence of civil commotions and of foreign wars, and the oppression and loss of liberty. To my mind, what have thus been set down as causes, it were more just to regard as consequences and effects. As surely as darkness comes when the sun sets, so surely will a nation decline, and gloom cover it, when its literature comes to be neglected, or corrupted. It was so with both the great nations referred to. Literary men began to relax their efforts. Men who might have been literary waxed fat, and fared sumptuously, and slept when they should have labored; or they contented their ambition by taking some shorter cut to the mastery-over the minds of men, and became tyrants when they should have been teachers and guides; or they became unfaithful stewards of the mysteries of learning and letters, and instead of appealing to the chaste and delicate sensibilities, sentiments and feelings native in the mind and heart of man, they aimed at qualities antagonist to all that is elevated in him, and plied him with sophistry, subtlety, affectation, and idle gaudery—and henceforth, and cause enough it was, that luxury prevailed, and taste and morals were corrupted, and civil commotions and unsuccessful foreign wars recurred, and liberty was lost.

Gentlemen, I repeat again; I would not have you politicians; and though you must never avoid the la-

bors and responsibilities of office, when called to it by duty and the voice of your country, yet would I have you aim at higher service. Govern the governors, and rule the rulers. Let your influence come from the voice, and from the pen. Serve your country, and your age, and mankind, with your learning, and your genius, and the force and teaching of your excellent and consistent example. Every one of you can do something. If you cannot write, you can read. If you cannot model the taste of others, you can cultivate your own. If you cannot create literature, you can encourage it. But you can do more than this; I should run little hazard in saying that there is not one of you who cannot aid directly, by his contributions, the cause of learning and letters. A small portion of time, a remnant, a scrap, carefully set apart and employed daily in this service, reserved, or stolen if you please, from necessary business and the carkings and cares of life; very much may be done by it. There is no need of exclusive devotion to literature; we want your contributions only, be they ever so few or small. There is no necessity, as there is no occasion, for hasty composition. It is better to write well, than to write much. If Virgil employed twelve years in elaborating the *Æneid*, or as he himself is said to have expressed it, in licking his cubs into shape and proportion,—which, by the way, might sound much better in his pure Latinity than it does in our vernacular,—and at last, when he found death approaching, would have committed the manuscripts to the flames as an unfinished production, if he could have found any body complying enough to bring them to him for the purpose; surely, gentlemen, after such

an example of patient toil, and considering too the rewards that have followed it, you may find opportunity enough, in the unemployed moments and hours of a whole life time, to furnish something, if it be not in bulk the fiftieth part of the *Æneid*, which shall aid materially if not equally, in forming and sustaining the body of the general mind. A single sentence, a single line, a single thought, or fragment of thought, struck off daily, polished, and set down for use, like a shaft for a Parthian bow, pointed, fitted and feathered, and laid away in its appropriate quiver—this alone, if you can do nothing more, will give you, in the lapse of brief years, an armoury of literary *materiel*, with which you may take the field in the confidence of certain and honored success. And at least, in this way, hoarding all your life-time and giving away nothing, you may finally leave the world a legacy, that may seem a trifle to you, but for which you shall have a monument in ten thousand grateful hearts, and the blessings of their children for generations that cannot be numbered.

But some of you at least, will be able to bring out more immediate results; and all of you may co-operate powerfully in the work to which the time calls you. I have already told you something of the peculiar features, circumstances, and tendencies of this time: and you can judge for yourselves in what quarter your services are most needed. I point you to this work, as being scholars; and because being scholars, you are almost of necessity, in that association, gentlemen. It is a work for men of mind, and for men of manners too. Neither qualification can be dispensed with. You are to be preachers of mo-

rals, and you are to form the manners of men also, for they are morals; and you cannot teach others, being yourselves untaught. Undoubtedly, the work *is* for scholars, for men whose minds are refined and polished, and their manners through their minds. It is to this class and order of persons only that the task of forming, refining and elevating the general mind and manners, can be committed. No other class can do it. At present, the general mind, and the general manners, and public morals, are in the hands of politicians. It will not do to leave them there. Public men and political parties are an overmatch in the department of ethics, for the clergy, who are now nearly the only public teachers whose doctrines war with theirs. Indeed, the clergy, in their capacity of religious teachers, hardly enter at all into this particular field of morals, the morals of politics—into the consideration of politics as a moral subject. But it will not do, I am sure it will not do, to leave this subject to take care of itself, or to leave it to the effect only of an abstract religious faith, practical and of universal application as I know that faith to be; and if the morals of politics may not be taught from the pulpit—and I must be allowed to say I do not see why not—yet the clergy belong to the association of scholars, and as literary men they should not and will not refuse to bring in their contributions to this suffering cause. The influence of government and of politics on morals in all countries is immense; in this country it is nearly overwhelming and irresistible. This influence, from being in hostility, must be gained over to the side and the cause of morals. And this is a work for scholars. Literature can do it, and no-

thing else will ; and in this work, gentlemen, I invoke your aid and co-operation.

And the grand requisites for this service are truth, fidelity, and courage. Without these you will be wholly unfurnished and unfit for this conflict. I have told you already that our politicians, by which I mean those who trade in politics, of whatever faith, complexion or party, are bold and confident in their measures and movements, chiefly because they rely, first on the credulity of the many who they suppose do not understand them, and next on the silence of the few who they know do understand them. Now, as belonging to the few who understand, I call on you to break this criminal silence. I speak from an unwilling conviction when I say, that there is less of personal independence and freedom of thought and opinion in this country, than in any country on the hither side of semi-barbarian despotism. Public opinion—the opinion of numbers—and the opinion of party within its sphere—on whatever subject, in whatever manner formed, and whatever may be its stamp and tendency—is nearly omnipotent ; and those who know it to be wrong, oppressive, and perilously wicked, and whose business it is to correct it, bow before it in tame, servile, ignominious submission. I call on you to burst these fetters, and be free. It is for you, and such as you, to instruct the people, and not be instructed by them. It is for you, and the like of you, to form and lead public opinion, and not leave it to be moulded and fashioned after patterns furnished by those who mean to use it for selfish and dishonest purposes. I hope there is not another country which the sun shines upon, barbarian, savage or civilized, where

less of truth is spoken according to an honest conviction of what it is, than in this. I call on you to cast off this slavish fear, and endeavor to bring back, and domesticate, and protect truth-telling dispositions and habits amongst us. I call on you to brave the displeasure of a sovereign who dares to be a tyrant, though he surround himself with terrors—armed though he be with the Bastile to incarcerate mind, and shut up offensive thought and opinion in dark, silent chambers and gloomy cells; or with the Guillotine to cut off the heads of all obnoxious sentiments as fast as they arise. Brave these terrors, and oppose them, and, by opposing, end them. Do not fear the people, but confide in them. They are never deliberately wrong and oppressive, but when they fall into bad hands. Teach them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. You will find in them—I am sure you will—an innate love of truth and of honesty. Pericles found it so in his time; he was never more truly popular, Cicero says, than when he opposed the will of the populace and declaimed against their favorites. I commend his example and his wisdom to you, gentlemen; and I take my leave of you with a prayer, such as I think a patriot mother might breathe for her sons—that God will give you courage to be honest, just and true.





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